



# La Voz

Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic  
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

October 2003

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## The President's Greeting

### CALIFORNIA, Here We Come

Sacramento, California, has been selected as the site for the 2004 NOPHNRCSE Training Conference, and Carmen Ortiz will be the chair of the planning committee. We need enthusiastic, hard working volunteers to help in this endeavor.

We need each one of you to consider serving on

the planning committee. Please contact your NOPHNRCSE regional representative and let them know you want to help.

We need to support this effort and we need to work fast. ACT NOW!

**Pedro Ramos, Jr.**  
President

## NRCS National Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (HEPM)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has selected Ricky Tafoya to serve a detail assignment as the National HEPM and will be reassigned to the National Headquarters-Civil Rights Staff, located in Beltsville, MD. Tafoya is the District Conservationist in the Taos, New Mexico, field office and has been serving as the Acting National HEPM in a collateral capacity since February of this year.

Tafoya has also been appointed to serve as the NRCS Liaison to the National Association of Hispanic Federal Execu-

tives (NAHFE). NAHFE is a non-profit organization dedicated to the recruitment, training, career development, and promotion of a diverse workforce in the federal government. This initiative will support and help implement previously enacted Executive Orders as well as a recently signed partnership agreement between the USDA and NAHFE.

Tafoya can be contacted at (301) 504-2187 or by email at the following email address: ricky.tafoya@usda.gov.

## News About NRCS Reorganization

There are two new sets of "Questions and Answers" on the NRCS proposed reorganization web page available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/reorg/index.html>.

You also may access the page via the Information for NRCS Employees tab on the national home page.

## National Civil Rights Committee

Sharyn C. Alvarez, NHQ, has recently been selected to serve as the Hispanic Female representative to the NRCS National Civil Rights Committee (NCRC). NCRC serves as an advisory body to the NRCS Chief to promote and assist in meaningful and effective affirmative action consistent with the goals and objectives set forth by management. You may reach Sharyn at 202-720-2771 or by email [sharyn.alvarez@usda.gov](mailto:sharyn.alvarez@usda.gov).

## Detail in New York

J. R. Flores, Deputy State Conservationist, Wyoming, will serve as Acting State Conservationist in New York from October 6, 2003, through February 2, 2004.



## International Travel - Afghanistan

The U.S. has made a long-term commitment to help Afghanistan rebuild after years of strife and war. Agriculture is the basis of the Afghan economy and the low incomes from this sector can be directly linked to the problems of poverty in the region. Fundamentally, solving the problem of poverty in rural Afghanistan will require a

rapid acceleration of agricultural growth, together with other multi-sector investments in education, health and infrastructure.

Manuel Ayala, NHQ, is currently serving as senior agricultural technical advisor in Bamian, Afghanistan. He left the country Sept. 15 and will return March 17, 2004. One of his tasks

will be to serve on the Provincial Reconstruction Team and mobilize available human resources with the team to design and implement agricultural development and soil and water conservation projects throughout the province. If you would like to contact Manuel you can email him at [manuel.ayala@usda.gov](mailto:manuel.ayala@usda.gov).

The Scholarship and Endowment Committee forwarded the scholarship awards to Korina Cardona of Clint, Texas; Amos A. Corrales of Gallina, New Mexico, and Christopher Diamond of Middletown, New York; the student winners of the 2003 scholarships.

### Scholarship Committee Report

The Scholarship and Endowment Committee, (Amanda Hasemeier, PA, chair) announces that it has forwarded the scholarship awards to Korina Cardona of Clint, Texas; Amos A. Corrales of Gallina, New Mexico, and Christopher Diamond of Middletown, New York; the student winners of the 2003 scholarships. Once again, the committee extends its thanks for your support.

### Interesting Websites

[www.donotcall.com](http://www.donotcall.com)

Website to get your phone number on a list so telemarketers will not call you.

[www.powerkidspress.com](http://www.powerkidspress.com)

Website that lists "Let's talk about" library series of books on a huge variety of subjects. For example, Let's talk about Dyslexia, Let's talk about living in a wheelchair, Let's talk about being afraid, Let's talk about being a friend.

[www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com)

Need the definition of a word or phrase, log in and type the word(s) and get the answer. This site references more than five million words.

## NOPHNRCSE is going to California in 2004!

The National Council has selected Sacramento, California, as the site for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual NOPHNRCSE Training Conference. The conference will be held the week of June 21-24, 2004. Carmen Ortiz, California, has been appointed to chair the conference planning committee.

As you all know, a successful conference depends on the hard work of enthusiastic, energetic members. The Planning Committee consists of many sub-committees:

- Agenda/Program Planning
- Auction
- Banquet - Program, Dinner, Dance
- Budget
- Conservation Tour
- Equipment - computers, AV equipment
- Hospitality
- Logistics - Hotel arrangements
- Moderators
- Natural Resources - Technical Papers
- Publicity/Attractions
- Registration
- Speakers



## NOPHNRCSE is going to California in 2004!

What do we need?

- Volunteers to work in any of the sub-committees.

If you are interested, please send an email to

Carmen.Ortiz@ca.usda.gov.

- A great theme. Send in your theme ideas to

Carmen.Ortiz@ca.usda.gov

- Program items. What training courses do you need to help you do your job better? Can you suggest topics for panels, technical papers, or workshops? Send your input to Carmen.Ortiz@ca.usda.gov.

Please submit your name/ideas as soon as possible.



For more  
California  
destinations,  
search the web  
for California  
Visitors Bureau  
for more  
information.

By the way, some of you may want to plan a vacation in California after the conference. Here is a list of Internet links to assist in your planning:

Sacramento - <http://www.sacramentocvb.org/>

Napa Valley - <http://www.napavalley.com/>

Lake Tahoe - <http://www.virtualtahoe.com/LTVA/>

San Francisco - <http://www.sfvisitor.org/>

Monterey - <http://www.monterey.com/>

Los Angeles - <http://www.lacvb.com/poe02/poe02fst.html>

Yosemite - <http://www.nps.gov/yose/>

Mono Lake - <http://www.monolake.org/>

Mt. Lassen Volcanic National Park - <http://www.nps.gov/lavo/>

If we have not listed your area of interest, just search for California Visitors Bureau for more information.

For more information about the conference, please contact Carmen Ortiz at (925) 672-4577, ext. 112 or via email at Carmen.Ortiz@ca.usda.gov.